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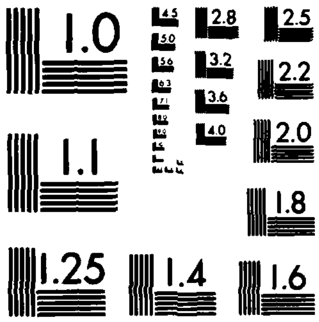

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TRIP REPORT: FORUM FOR U.S.-SOVIET DIALOGUE
MOSCOW, KISHINEV, MINSK, LENINGRAD
JULY 16-31, 1984

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INTRODUCTION

The Thirteenth Annual Forum for U.S.-Soviet Dialogue took place July 16-31, 1984, in the Soviet Union. The forum, an American non-partisan, not-for-profit organization established in 1972, sponsors a program of mutual educational and cultural exchange in cooperation with the Committee of Youth Organizations of the USSR.

The 40-member U.S. delegation to the 1984 forum, of which I was a member, consisted almost entirely of young professionals from the Washington area. The delegates, chosen by the forum selection committee to provide a broad spectrum of views, represented (unofficially) the Heritage Foundation, Hoover Institution, American Enterprise Institute, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, Center for Defense Information, *National Journal*, *Christian Science Monitor*, E. F. Hutton, and others. They were, as a group, more conservative than the delegates to the 1983 forum in Manchester, New Hampshire, although many, myself included, had also attended that conference.

The Soviet delegates represented the Institute of the USA and Canada (IUSAC), Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Academy of Sciences, Radio Moscow, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Moscow Patriarchate, various ministries and other organizations, and the Committee of Youth Organizations (KMO), which hosted the conference. The delegates of both countries were distributed evenly among the forum's five commissions: U.S.-Soviet relations, arms control (on which I served), education, trade and economics, and the media.

On arriving in the Soviet Union, we spent three days in Moscow, meeting with representatives of the Committee for European Security and an official of the Ministry of Defense, visiting press agencies, and squeezing in sight-seeing between scheduled activities. On

July 19, we flew to Kishinev, the capital of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1488 kilometers south-southwest of Moscow, for the forum meetings.

Our commission discussions lasted three hours per day. We were required to speak in our native language at these meetings; our commission's two Soviet interpreters translated both from English to Russian and Russian to English. Outside of the meetings, however, we few Russian speakers in the delegation had many opportunities to practice our Russian with the Soviet delegates. Another American delegate and I were often called on to help the others in discussions with Soviet delegates who did not speak English.

Commission discussions were followed by lunch and meetings with various friendship or youth societies, roundtable discussions, trips to factories and collective farms, and cultural events. As expected, we had little time for exploring the city on our own or mingling with the local people. Evenings were spent socializing with fellow Americans; occasionally, a few of our Soviet counterparts joined us.

After five days of discussions in Kishinev, we flew to Minsk, capital of the Belorussian Republic. We had been told originally that we were going to Volgograd. At the last minute, however, the Soviets evidently decided that it was inappropriate, given the current state of U.S.-Soviet relations, for the American delegates to visit Stalingrad on the 40th anniversary of the World War II battle.

We visited a large war museum in Minsk and the impressive, very moving Khatyn war memorial outside the city. The Khatyn memorial stands as a tribute to the 2,230,000 people who perished and the 9,200 villages that were razed by the Germans in World War II. Our agenda also included a trip to a peace committee and Pioneer camp. We were warmly received by the young pioneers, who treated us to a concert and dancing. One of their livelier (albeit morbid) songs was entitled "One in Four," referring to the Belorussians who died in the war. Less warm was the pioneers' American artwork: One poster displayed at the camp showed Reagan surrounded by missiles; another called for a ban on neutron bombs.

Our final days (July 28 to 30) were spent in Leningrad. On Navy day, July 29, Kynda-class frigates and WWII-vintage submarines lined the Neva embankment, and sailors and medal-laden officers filled the streets. We watched fireworks from the hotel that evening.

Tired of laying wreaths at war memorials and listening to talk of Euromissiles, we spent our two last days shopping and sight-seeing.

DISCUSSIONS IN MOSCOW, JULY 17-19

Committee for European Security

Some ten of us met with representatives of the Committee for European Security and Cooperation (KEBS) on July 17. (We were divided evenly among this committee, IUSAC, and a women's committee.) The 108-member KEBS was founded in 1971 by several nongovernmental organizations, including the KMO, Academy of Sciences, and Peace Fund, to deal with problems of European security. Nikolay Tolkunov chairs the committee, which claims 85 million monetary contributors. IMEMO *institutchiki*, acting as KEBS consultants, hosted this meeting; they included Proektor, Avakov, Kakiyev, Lobanov, and Baranovskiy.

Colonel Dr. Daniil Proektor, distinguished senior researcher at IMEMO and an expert on national security policy, opened the discussion. He stressed the importance of military parity and maintained that although trust was lacking between our countries, arms control problems could be solved, as they had been in the 1970s. According to Proektor, our two countries must negotiate Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) proposals. It was not the Soviets' fault, he added, that the talks had been disrupted. The Euromissiles clearly tipped the balance in favor of the United States, he said, and then listed Soviet initiatives, such as renunciation of the use of force, no first use of nuclear weapons, and creation of nuclear-free zones in Europe as evidence of the Soviet pursuit of peace. In conclusion, he indicated that he had directed his remarks at me, and he asked that I be the next to speak.

I defended the INF deployments, citing the NATO policy of flexible response. Concerning the initiatives, I pointed out that in

signing the UN Charter in 1945, the United States had rejected the use of force and that the Soviet Union could pledge no first use of nuclear weapons, given its conventional preponderance, whereas the United States could not, given its commitment to extended deterrence and conventional inferiority--especially at the outset of a conflict.

Proektor then resorted to the geography argument that SS-20s were deployed not only to offset the European threat of U.S. forward-based systems (FBS), but to counter threats from U.S. military forces in the Middle East, Persian Gulf, Indonesia, etc. He claimed that the Soviets would never use conventional forces in Europe, because the USSR has "no aggressive aspirations." He called the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles a threat, given their first-strike, decapitating capabilities. Memories of World War II, combined with the Pershing II deployment, render the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) a double threat, he claimed.

Another Soviet representative referred to political will as the driver of military developments and deployments and accused the United States of a lack of political will from the beginning of the deployment discussion in 1979.

I was pleased to have had the opportunity to meet these few IMEMO researchers, but found the dialogue uninspiring; such meetings are probably routine for KEBS members.

Meeting with Colonel Batenin

Colonel of Artillery Victor V. Batenin, representative of the Soviet General Staff, Ministry of Defense, met with half of the American delegation at our hotel on July 18. He delivered a rather lengthy speech and then answered questions. He made the following points:

- "The current politico-military situation is complicated but not catastrophic. It is not time to beat the drum."
- The Reagan administration ought to consult its scientists, whose work has revealed the infeasibility of developing an effective defense against ballistic missiles.
- There is no boundary between offensive and defensive nuclear weapons.

- The Soviets will return to the negotiating table if the United States withdraws the Euromissiles or *states that it is ready to do so.*
- Current national technical means (NTM) are 99 percent effective for monitoring satellite testing. Small antisatellite (ASAT) systems, however, cannot be monitored. The Soviets support verification, but the United States makes it a condition for every negotiation. This, in effect, puts the cart before the horse.
- Although the United States insists on combining space talks with START, the two countries will probably achieve a breakthrough, given the importance of negotiating space weapons. "We're prepared to discuss nonuse of force in space generally, as well as particular aspects of ASATs, such as the destruction of existing systems."

With regard to ballistic missile defenses (BMD), Batenin maintained that the United States had never officially agreed to the cooperative deployment of a ballistic missile defensive system. The Soviet Union does not regard such a deployment as possible and wants to ban *all* space-based systems.

Asked if, in principle, there were anything wrong with attempting to defend populations with BMD, he responded that the Soviet Union does not oppose *defense*, because defensive actions are a legal form of warfare, as are offensive ones. However, the Soviet Union rejects BMD, he said, because it is not defensive. He believes that since a leakproof defensive system is unattainable, much of the population would perish. Moreover, BMD would violate the ABM treaty and assuredly lead to the development of new offensive weapon systems.

Colonel Batenin said the following about Euromissiles:

- INF deployment has placed the Soviet Union in a position analogous to that of the United States in 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis. Imagine how the United States would react if missiles were fielded in Mexico. SS-20s will be deployed only on Soviet territory.

- Deployed U.S. missiles are strategic, as are French and British systems. Moreover, these missiles have tipped the existing balance in favor of NATO. Their short flight time would not give the USSR sufficient warning to react.
- Pershing IIs (and even cruise missiles) cannot be compared with SS-20s, given the Pershing II's rapid flight time, keen accuracy, range, and ability to strike any target in the Soviet Union, *especially SS-20 control centers.*
- Existing air defense detection systems of both sides are inadequate to defend against cruise missile penetration.

Roundtable on Arms Control
Kishinev, July 20

Two American and two Soviet delegates participated in a discussion of arms control open to all delegates, staff members, and the Soviet press. One Soviet delegate again raised INF, pointing to the 1958 NATO deployment of nuclear weapons in Italy and Turkey as the cause of the medium-range missile race. The Soviets, he claimed, were forced to respond in the early 1960s by deploying 600 SS-4s and SS-5s. The modernization program begun in the 1970s substituted two SS-20s for every three SS-5s, he said, thus reducing the total number of launchers to 473, of which only half are SS-20s. The United States raised no objections to this modernization act at that time, he continued, and in fact began flight-testing cruise missiles in 1972 and Pershing IIs in 1975. Hence, the speaker concluded, the U.S. insistence on rationalizing its INF deployments as a response to a Soviet threat has no foundation.

An American delegate identified two Soviet miscalculations with regard to Euromissiles: (1) They underestimated the Western reaction to the deployment of SS-20s, which, in fact, increased the number of warheads poised at Western Europe, and (2) they overestimated their capacity to prevent the deployment of Euromissiles by provoking internal crises in some countries and to weaken the U.S.-Western

European bond. (A Soviet speaker later denied that the USSR had attempted to influence the German elections. According to him, "there was no real election in the FRG. The CDU [Christian Democratic Union] represented the implementers of the INF decision, the SPD [Social Democratic Party], the proposers.") The American concluded that it was still possible to improve the current situation; U.S. deployments to date were militarily insignificant, he said, because Pershing IIs could not reach Moscow and therefore the Soviets' demand that the missiles be withdrawn is unrealistic.

A Soviet speaker then accused the United States and its NATO allies of wasting the time since 1979, when the Soviets were not only ready to talk constructively, but went more than halfway to accommodate the West with sensible proposals. Another delegate warned that the USSR would return to Geneva only when both countries returned to a condition of "parity and equal security."

The Soviets argued that the SS-20 should not be compared with the Pershing II, because the Pershing II is "strategic" and the SS-20 is not. They admitted that the SS-20's accuracy had improved but maintained that it was still only "one-tenth" as accurate as the Pershing II.

Hoping (but admittedly not expecting) to gain any insight into Soviet air defense capabilities against ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs), I asked about the discrepancy between Soviet statements that the Tomahawk is impossible to detect and is therefore a first-strike weapon and the sanguine comments by Soviet air defense officials to the effect that any enemy airborne attackers could be struck long before they reached their Soviet targets. I was told to read in the handbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) the section on long-range cruise missiles, in which the cruise missile is defined as a first-strike weapon because it cannot be detected.

COMMISSION MEETINGS IN KISHINEV, JULY 19-26

Day One: Sources of the Arms Race

The American delegates made a sincere, but fruitless, effort to elicit discussion of defense decisionmaking in the Soviet Union. One American delegate noted that the secretive nature of the Soviet decisionmaking process, particularly with regard to procurement, serves only to create uncertainty and feed suspicion in the West as to Soviet intentions and thus works against the Soviets' best interests. He also asked about the military's inordinate influence, citing two examples: Khrushchev's references in his memoirs (which were not published in the USSR) to the budget-hungry military leaders and Ogarkov's scolding an American representative during SALT I negotiations for sharing military details with a civilian.

The Soviets responded agitatedly to such queries, insisting that they represented stock statements. One Soviet delegate said: "We don't represent the Defense Council. The motto of our conference is mutual understanding, yet it is digressing into a series of monologues." They also denied the authenticity of Khrushchev's memoirs and reaffirmed the competence of Soviet negotiators at arms control conferences.

The Soviets criticized the U.S. military-industrial complex, charging that its large budget allows it to thrive and to perpetuate the arms race. At the same time, they denied that the Soviet Union has any classes or factions interested in continuing the arms race. (An American later reminded them of the four Soviet military design bureaus, which have a similar stake in maintaining the arms race.) According to the Soviets, "the absolute weapon demands an absolute enemy--hence the 'Soviet threat' is used to rationalize military spending in the United States."

In response to an American delegate's comment that declaratory policies are undermined by employment and deployment policies, one Soviet remarked that that does not apply in the Soviet Union, where "declaratory policy--such as the no-first-use pledge--tells the military what to do." When asked to elaborate on no first use, one Soviet

cited the impossibility of controlling or limiting a nuclear conflict. A commander who was exposed to radiation, he pointed out, would have no means of determining whether it came from a tactical, operational-tactical, or strategic nuclear weapon; hence, the need for a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons of any scale.

Finally, a Soviet delegate traced the arms race to 1945, when President Truman began to fear the cordial relationship that was developing between the Soviet Union and Poland at Potsdam. American delegates pointed to the concept of permanent revolution in Marxist-Leninist theory as the basis of Soviet aspirations. Soviet assistance to revolutionary movements around the world, the American said, derives entirely from Marxist-Leninist theory; moreover, he said, such assistance makes the United States less willing to negotiate major arms control agreements.

Day Two: Economic, Social, and Moral Consequences of the Arms Race

At this session, the delegates discussed the burden that military expenditures place on the economies of both sides and the world at large. An American delegate questioned the Soviet leadership's refusal to disclose its true military budget or military production figures to the Soviet public. In response, a Soviet delegate told the American "not to take pity on the readers of *Pravda*."

While American and Soviet delegates agreed that the large sums of money spent by both sides on weapons could be used more wisely, the point was also made that the adoption of a no-first-use pledge requiring the upgrading of conventional arsenals represents a case in which increased military expenditures might prove to be a positive step.

An American delegate asked why the Soviets had adopted a policy of massive retaliation. A Soviet delegate answered that conventional forces could not reach the United States and therefore the Soviets had to rely on such a policy. Nevertheless, he later remarked that if the Soviet Union were relying on massive retaliation, it would

build only one kind of missile, such as the SS-18. In fact, he said, the Soviet policy is more flexible than mere massive retaliation, as witnessed by its possession of tactical nuclear weapons, SS-20s, and aircraft.

In a private discussion outside of the commission meeting, a Soviet delegate characterized Soviet declaratory doctrine as one of "massive retaliation," although given Soviet weapons procurement and capabilities, he said, its operational policy resembles NATO's strategy of flexible response. He also insisted that the top political leadership's role in decisionmaking was *not* substantially influenced by the military, saying "Chernenko is the head of the Defense Council. . . . Soviet generals don't know anything--they aren't competent enough to have a strong voice in military decisionmaking."

I opened the second half of this meeting with a discussion of the moral dilemmas posed by nuclear strategies. Specifically, I raised the issue of the U.S. concept of deterrence and the Soviet Union's rejection of a minimalist approach to deterrence (such as the policy of targeting of cities adopted by Secretary of Defense McNamara in the 1960s), which would set ceilings for arms expenditures, instead of a warfighting approach, in which no limits are set and the race continues.

The Soviets received my presentation favorably. One Soviet delegate remarked that between 1961 and 1981 the United States lived in a "MAD" (mutual assured destruction) world confirmed by the ABM treaty. However, he continued, Reagan's strategists find assured destruction insufficient, while the Soviets view it in a favorable light, and now the warfighting school has gained a preeminent position in the United States. According to other Soviet speakers: "Guaranteed retaliation can provide peace, even without a SALT agreement. But the absence of a SALT treaty combined with defenses renders the situation very unstable." "Controlled war enthusiasts have won the day."

Day Three: The Limitation and Reduction of Strategic Nuclear Arms

Today's discussion began where yesterday's ended. Asked again about the feasibility of adopting policies of minimum deterrence, a Soviet delegate again criticized U.S. "harmful" warwinning doctrines, such as that of limited nuclear war, that increase the likelihood of war. "Nuclear war cannot be subject to rules," he said.

An American delegate then turned to strategic defense initiatives (SDI), asking how, if a foolproof defensive system were achievable and capable of protecting populations from nuclear attack, could it be viewed as anything but moral. The Soviet maintained that (1) strategic defensive and offensive weapons are inseparable and (2) strategic defense would preclude retaliation and would therefore encourage a first strike.

An American asked: If agreements were reached that limited offensive weapons, how would the Soviets view pursuit of defensive systems? The Soviets responded that, according to many military spokesmen, a leakproof BMD is unachievable; SLBMs and cruise missiles, even if limited, cannot be detected from space; and the present balance rests on mutual vulnerabilities. Instability, they said, would result if either side sensed that it was invulnerable.

Asked if they were concerned about the unraveling of the ABM treaty in the light of new technical initiatives and if they had given thought to upgrading or modifying the treaty, the Soviets responded that the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) meets regularly to handle these questions and that there is no real question that the treaty's clauses are being undermined. According to one Soviet delegate, links exist between offensive and defensive weaponry and their interrelationship must be considered when modifying the ABM treaty.

An American delegate then turned to the problem of negotiating stumbling blocks or barriers, such as the disagreement over the weapons to be negotiated (aircraft and/or missiles, defensive and/or offensive), verification problems that have accompanied the development of advanced technologies, and compliance problems with existing treaties. Here the American delegate listed all of the Soviet

violations (SA-X-12, Abalakova radar, etc.). In response, a Soviet delegate called for a more academic approach to our dialogue. "We don't want to be subjected to armchair strategists."

An American delegate then returned to the issue of the morality of a mutually deployed civilian-protecting BMD, in the hope of eliciting a positive response from the Soviets. A mutually deployed BMD would benefit the arms control process on two accounts, according to the American: It would render offensive weapons obsolete, and it would ease verification if both sides had a reliable system. He concluded that even a partial defensive system to defend ICBM silos would strengthen deterrence and bolster stability because it would discourage a first strike.

A Soviet delegate asked whether the armor or the sword is more dangerous. Defense of the civilian population is moral, he said, but BMD won't work. The civilian population, he continued, could be hit by sea-based as well as space-based weapons. In his view, both ABM systems and all other weapons based in space are *unambiguously immoral*.

With regard to space weapons (ASAT and BMD), an American delegate remarked that if the Soviets are indeed interested in a comprehensive approach to limiting these systems, it is only logical to include strategic offensive weapons in the discussions, as was the case in SALT I. The Soviets themselves, he pointed out, assert that there is no boundary between offensive and defensive weapons and that defensive systems should not be viewed in a vacuum. Hence, the American said, there is a contradiction in separating space weapon talks from strategic offensive weapon negotiations if the Soviets sincerely aim to limit strategic defensive systems.

While the United States would like to discuss START and INF, the American continued, their inclusion should not be regarded as a precondition to space weapon talks. He indicated further that an agreement might possibly be reached if the talks were separated, but that the United States would not agree to destroy all space weapons, as the Soviets would like to do. He predicted that a limited ban on high

altitude ASATs might be negotiated but that a ban on low altitude ASATs probably could not. He gave the following rationale: While the Soviet Union already possesses an operational ASAT system (the SS-9), the United States is only testing its own system (the F-15); until the U.S. system becomes operational, the chances for an ASAT ban are poor. The Abalakova controversy, he added, has also impeded negotiations; until the SCC can resolve it, SDI proponents will continue to use it as proof of Soviet ABM violation to support their own programs. Hence, he concluded, it is in the Soviets' best interest to resolve this issue expeditiously.

A Soviet delegate pointed out the difficulty of defining space weapons. "It seems silly to develop space-based systems and at the same time try to define what they are. . . . The Soviet proposal seeks to preclude the extension of the arms race to space." The United States, he said, has indeed set a precondition by seeking to include START and INF in the talks and, in the Soviet view, this precondition is unacceptable. He also remarked that verification cannot be regarded as either an obstacle or an end in itself.

In reference to the last point, I asked, concerning the verification of cruise missiles (distinguishing nuclear from conventional ones), if there were any suggestions on the Soviet side as to how we might approach this problem together. A Soviet delegate responded that verification of cruise missiles is an old problem and that our efforts should be directed at preventing the development of new weapons systems that will pose similar problems for verification. When I pressed him to suggest approaches to the verification of existing cruise missiles, he simply gave a historical account of U.S. cruise missile developments.

An angered American delegate ended the discussion on a sour note:

> The U.S. delegation came here to engage in positive dialogue and has attempted today to present constructive ideas. All we have heard from the Soviets is long-winded and unconstructive discussion of past problems. We have heard nothing of a serious nature regarding problems of the present.

Day Four: Reduction of Military Forces in the European Theater

Today's somewhat less confrontational discussion took place at a meeting hall in Tiraspol, a city near Kishinev, where we were to spend the day visiting a collective farm and a Moldavian home.

An American delegate opened the discussion by pointing out areas in which progress had been made in Geneva: (1) Soviet agreement to withdraw missiles from Asia, (2) U.S. agreement to account for French and British missiles and perhaps withhold part of the deployment, and (3) Soviet flexibility regarding warhead counting. The problem of deciding which forces should be counted was raised, especially since the force structures of both sides differ significantly. In conclusion, she asked the delegates to consider two approaches: the walk-in-the-woods formula for missile reductions by both sides and the merging of SALT and INF, especially since the Soviets consider the Pershing II and cruise missiles strategic.

A Soviet delegate noted that the United States had rejected the walk in the woods, but that the two sides could find a way out of the deadlock by limiting aircraft. "Sea-based aircraft," he said, "are more important to limit than missiles." The United States, he continued, has far more aircraft than the USSR: two forward-based aircraft carriers with 80 aircraft, each carrying 20 ALCMs, far exceeding the number of aircraft discussed during the walk in the woods.

An American said that this information was incorrect--that U.S. aircraft carriers may carry up to 36 aircraft, including helicopters and reconnaissance aircraft. It is preposterous to say, he continued, that each would carry 20 cruise missiles, since the missile allocation depends on the mission. Moreover, according to him, A-6s and A-7s carrying that many cruise missiles would "drown."

The Soviet delegate conceded that while the walk-in-the-woods formula fails to address the British and French arsenals, it could provide a "quick fix" until a way of including the "independent deterrents" was found. Another Soviet delegate remarked that, while the walk-in-the-woods proposal might normalize the situation, most hope

lay in the merging of INF and START talks, which would include the French and British forces. Otherwise, he said, the Soviets would have to deploy more SS-20s.

Outside of the commission meeting, I asked the IUSAC researcher about cruise missile categorization as a first-strike weapon. He responded that whether cruise missiles are first or second strike is not as important as the fact that U.S. cruise missile technology far exceeds that of the Soviet Union. Since they are so cheap, he said, the United States can produce droves of them and give the contract to Japan. "We'll have SONY cruise missiles threatening the Far East," the Soviet said. Cruise missiles pose problems for air defense forces, he continued, because their small size prevents them from being detected, whereas "bombers are easier to detect."

Day Five: Prospects for Confidence-Building Measures

Our final discussion was conducted in a fairly congenial atmosphere. Both sides agreed to the value of confidence-building measures, although the Soviets, again, pointed to their tendency to agree to confidence-building measures first and to worry about verification second, whereas the United States takes the opposite tack. The United States takes a "technical approach," noted one American, while the Soviets take a "political approach."*

Both sides agreed that there is no single, agreed-on definition of confidence-building measures, although such measures usually include notification (e.g., of military exercises), inspection, and information exchanges (e.g., about budgets and military units), all aimed at preventing accidents through miscalculation. A Soviet delegate acknowledged the importance of monitoring measures that are legal and commensurate with the scope of the agreement.

*Whereas the U.S. approach builds on the 1975 Helsinki agreement to develop ways, for example, of providing for the exchange of information and on-site inspection, the Soviet initiatives are largely declaratory and include the following: the pledge not to use force and not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, the creation of nuclear-free zones, the disclosure of military budgets, a ban on chemical and biological weapons in Europe, and the notification of maneuvers.

The delegates also agreed that interference (e.g., jamming) of one another's NTM should be prohibited, including satellites and airborne and seaborne radars. Another Soviet delegate remarked that verification should not be the only source of confidence and that confidence between nations is based on political, legal, military-political, and military-technical factors--all interrelated.

The Soviet delegates appeared to be unaware of the Warner-Nunn proposal to establish crisis-prevention centers in Washington and Moscow to maintain a 24-hour watch and provide an organizational structure for communication between our countries in the event of nuclear use by a third party. When we asked them their opinion of the proposal, one Soviet delegate answered briefly: "We aren't officials and can't comment." He went on to list Soviet peace initiatives.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

About the Conference

I found the commission discussions this year somewhat less enlightening than those that took place in New Hampshire last summer. Not only were the Soviet delegates better qualified last year, but they were willing to answer the questions asked of them instead of simply evading them or changing the topic. The Soviet cochairman of the arms control commission (a senior IUSAC researcher) monopolized the discussion, and I sensed that the other Soviet delegates were inhibited by him. Yet, given his position at IUSAC, the Americans were most interested in his remarks. I found myself, by the end of the week, directing my questions at him.

The Soviets put great stock in the so-called final document, in which each commission and ultimately the conference as a whole lists areas of agreement. Last year, our commission drew up some 15 points of agreement; this year, we could agree on only a few, innocuous statements. The forum leaders decided that it would be in our best interest to forgo the final document, since the Soviet media might skew the wording to suit its propaganda purposes. We ended up with a

communique that said in essence: "We arrived, we met with Soviet delegates to discuss X, Y, Z, and we departed."

The Soviet side showed obvious concern that the American delegation is becoming too "professional." Gone are the days when only peace activists represented the forum. For our part, despite the frustration in engaging in serious and constructive dialogue, endless hours of riding buses and laying wreaths at war memorials, and being blasted about Euromissiles, not one of the participants regretted having made the journey and many of us hope to return.

About Life in the Soviet Union

While life seemed to move along much the same as I had remembered it from my last visit, three years ago, I was told that the political climate had taken a turn for the worse. Corruption campaigns begun under Andropov continue under Chernenko, and new laws aimed at discouraging Soviet citizens from fraternizing with visitors from capitalist countries have been enacted.

- The thriving black market offers the only means of acquiring an apartment in Moscow unless one is prepared to wait ten years. Cars are also said to be cheaper and more easily obtainable on the black market. Video cassette recorders (VCRs) are currently the hottest items. Cassettes are said to cost 120 rubles ($180.00).
- The ambitious, controversial plan to divert northern waters to the south for irrigation purposes, rejected by Andropov, is now being reconsidered. It will cost some 100 billion rubles, three times the cost of the *Baikal-Amur Magistral* (BAM) railroad project.
- High quality Hungarian and Bulgarian chickens are available in markets for 24 rubles, or about $33.00. (An average salary is 220-230 rubles per month, or $340.00.)

- o Roughly 100 people in Leningrad died from drinking Kvass that had become contaminated when the producer had attempted to cut corners by leaving out a necessary ingredient.
- o Collective farms in Moldavia are short of help, especially during the harvest season. The officials openly admit the problem of attracting young people to live and work in rural areas.
- o Doctors pay house calls in the Soviet Union. However, regardless of one's ailment, they will simply feel one's forehead, check one's pulse, and prescribe medications that can be purchased only on the black market.

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